



Department of Commerce
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Growth Management Services

PLANNER'S UPDATE

A monthly newsletter to share helpful information
related to planning in Washington State.

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Welcome to the Planner's Update.

Please feel free to send us any
comments or ideas for how to
make this newsletter more useful.

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1. GMA AND RELATED LAWS RCW UPDATE 2014 RELEASE

GMA and Related Laws RCW Update 2014 Release – The Department of Commerce’s popular publication [Growth Management Act and Related Laws – 2014 RCW Update](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Services/localgovernment/GrowthManagement/Pages/LawsRules.aspx) is now available. Due to state budget constraints, this booklet will only be available as an electronic document; no hardcopies will be printed. This is a valuable resource for local government planners, so be sure to add it to your list of website favorites!
<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Services/localgovernment/GrowthManagement/Pages/LawsRules.aspx>

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2. COMMERCE SEEKS COMMENTS ON GMA RULE UPDATES

Commerce is seeking comments on the proposed amendments to administrative rules guiding implementation of the Growth Management Act. We have filed proposed “housekeeping” changes to existing rules to catch up with statutory changes adopted between 2011 and 2012:

- Modifying the GMA review schedule (aligning deadlines for buildable lands reports, Urban Growth Area reviews, and the 8-year “periodic update”).
- Clarifying the definition of “critical areas” (irrigation ditches are not considered “fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas”).

Commerce is taking comments on proposed changes until December 11, 2014. A public hearing on the proposed changes is scheduled for December 11, 2014 at the following location:

Washington State Department of Commerce
1011 Plum Street SE, Building 5
Columbia River Room 110
Olympia, WA

The rule update web site is at www.commerce.wa.gov/wacupdate. Interested parties for this and future updates can subscribe to the WAC Update ListServ for updates on the status of rule development and opportunities for public comment.

Please email comments or questions to WACUPDATE@commerce.wa.gov or contact **Scott Kuhta**, Scott.Kuhta@commerce.wa.gov 509-795-6884.

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3. CFP WEBINARS

The final draft of the Capital Facilities Planning Guidebook has been completed. Commerce GMS and the Public Works Board will host two webinars about capital facilities planning under the GMA. The first webinar will be Tuesday, November 18 at 10:00 a.m., focusing on an overview of the statutory requirements and guidance from the related rules. The second webinar will be Tuesday, December 2 at 10:00 a.m., focusing on practical applications and how-to develop a CFP. Click [here for information about joining the webinars](#).

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4. THE SHORT COURSE ON LOCAL PLANNING

Since 1977, the Short Course on Local Planning has been presented in Washington communities, coordinated by the Washington State Department of Commerce, in partnership with the Planning Association of Washington (PAW). The Short Course is an opportunity for planning commissioners, local government staff, elected officials, and community members to learn about comprehensive planning and community development, the legal framework for land use planning, and public involvement in the planning process.

Commerce engages additional Short Course on Local Planning partners

In early 2014, the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Washington) approached Commerce as a new partner, with the goal of strengthening support for planning through citizen education. As a result, Commerce and PAW are pleased to welcome APA Washington as a Short Course partner. An expanded partnership will add value by leveraging our collective strengths and resources. This newly expanded Short Course partnership sends a united message that planning works in Washington, and that successful communities don't happen by accident. Other partners have been contributing over the long term. Since 2009, the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA), a liability insurance risk pool, has also been supporting the short course program and encouraging their members to attend because education is recognized as a tool for reducing land-use liability.

New Short Course video series

The Department of Commerce in coordination with partners, and the videography of the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) has produced a series of 10-minute videos that cover all the topics in the Short Course on Local Planning. These videos are intended to provide basic short course information on demand, rather than waiting for an in-person Short Course to be held locally. The first videos in the 10-part series will be ready this fall. See these on the [Short Course web site](#). Also added this year to our video listings are Special Short Course videos on Urban Forestry, Economic Development, Sustainable Development and Infill Development for Small Cities.

Open Public Meetings Act training now required

The Short Course has long included information on the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). **As of July 1, 2014 (ESB 5964), training on the OPMA is required for every member of a governing body.** In light of the new law, Commerce worked with the Office of the Attorney General to assure our training provides the required information for Planning Commissioners and other board members, and includes a certificate of training for attendees.

Thank you 2014 Short Course presenters!

In 2014, eighteen Short Courses on Local Planning were presented in all corners of the state. An average of 30 people attended each course. The largest groups of audience members were planning commissioners (one third), state and local government staff (another third), and elected officials (20 percent). We extend a big thank you to all the organizations that hosted the course, and to all the presenters including attorneys Mike Connelly, Ken Harper, Bob Mack, Jeff Myers, Phil Olbrechts, Elizabeth Tellessen, and Grant Weed and planners and special guests including Ryan Andrews, Jennifer Aylor, Chaz Bates, Leonard Bauer, Thera Black, Chris Branch, Amy Buckler, Gary Christenson, Larry Cort, Gregg Dohrn, Megan Duvall, David Ginther, Greg Griffiths, Cari Hornbein, Laura Hudson, Gretchen Kaehler, TJ Kieran, John Kingele, Anne Knapp, Mark Lahaie, Kerry Lyste, Robin McClelland, John McDonagh, Gary Mabley, Bill Mandeville, Scott Missal, Deborah Munkberg, Stephen Neuenschwander, Ferdouse Oneza, Christy Osborn, Emil Pierson, Karen Scharer, Morgan Shook, Beth Spadoni, Amy Tousley, Joe

Tovar, and Bill Trimm. We thank you for your time and effort in making these Short Courses a success.

Book now for 2015 Short Course

Commerce is in the process of setting up local Short Courses in 2015. If your community is approaching a comprehensive plan update, training a new contingent of planning commissioners, or examining specific local issues and would like a broad view, the Short Course on Local Planning is available. Email <mailto:Anne.Fritzel@commerce.wa.gov> or call 360-725-3064 to request a short course in your area. *Hosts must be willing to invite a regional audience.*

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5. COASTAL HAZARD RESILIENCE NETWORK

Commerce was recently invited to join the multi-agency [Coastal Hazards Resilience Network](http://www.wacoastalnetwork.com/) <http://www.wacoastalnetwork.com/> to participate in providing assistance to local governments on planning for potential impacts from significant hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and landslides. This partnership includes a range of partners from various institutions, disciplines, and sectors at the local, state, and federal level. It is a planning network in which one or more coastal hazard issues can be addressed through partnerships to enhance communication, cooperation, coordination, and/or collaboration.

In an initial partnership effort, FEMA has completed a detailed risk assessment for Grays Harbor County to include all Cities within the County, which has been summarized in a report which can be downloaded [here](#). The risk assessment includes a detailed assessment on every building in each community and determines losses due to flood and earthquake, and also assesses impacts from tsunami and landslides. In addition to the risk assessment, a mitigation action section highlights potential mitigation projects as identified through the risk assessment and also includes an overview of actions in the current mitigation plan for each jurisdiction. A draft of this report was presented to Grays Harbor officials on Oct. 23, 2014. Future reports will cover other coastal communities.

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6. OREGON BIG LOOK TASK FORCE

Tuesday November 11, 2014 in Seattle, the Department of Commerce, UW Center for Livable Communities, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt, Bullitt Foundation and Forterra are sponsoring an event to celebrate the Washington State Growth Management Act drawing closer to its 25 year anniversary. These sponsors are wondering if the time has come for a state-wide neutral performance review of the GMA.

Oregon, through its Big Look Task Force, has completed such an assessment. The event will feature two members of Oregon's Big Look Task Force and some Washington Legislators who helped to write the GMA Law. Process and results of the Oregon assessment will be shared and participants will address the challenges and needs for the next 25 years, and encourage state and local policymakers to continue to create prosperous and diverse communities where people want to live. This exclusive event is by invitation only.

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7. EPA INVITES COMMUNITIES TO APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE

EPA today invited communities to apply for technical assistance to implement smart growth development approaches. EPA is offering this technical assistance through the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/buildingblocks.htm> to help communities across the country--including underserved communities, coastal communities, small cities and rural areas--adopt sustainable growth strategies. The program aims to increase resilience to natural disasters and strengthen the economy while protecting human health and the environment. Building Blocks provides quick, targeted technical assistance to communities using tools with demonstrated results and widespread application.

Communities may apply for assistance on one or more of the following topics:

- Equitable development
- Infill development for distressed cities
- Bikeshare planning
- Sustainable strategies for small cities and rural areas
- Flood resilience for riverine and coastal communities

If selected, a community will work with an EPA-supported team of experts during a one-to-two-day workshop, where participants will learn about relevant strategies, policies, and practices.

EPA will select up to 25 communities through a competitive process. Selections will be made in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov>. This interagency collaboration coordinates federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services to get better results for communities and use taxpayer money more efficiently.

Applications will be accepted between October 23 and November 20, 2014. EPA will host a webinar to discuss the program and the application process on Thursday, October 30, 2014, from 3 to 4 p.m. EDT.

- Learn about the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program: <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/buildingblocks.htm>
- Read the Request for Letters of Interest: <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/buildingblocks/Building-Blocks-RFLI-2014.pdf>

Learn about the webinar: <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/webinars/index.html>

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8. A NEW TOOL FROM USGS: THE PEDESTRAIN EVACUATION ANALYST

This free, downloadable software is designed for use by researchers examining the pedestrian-evacuation potential of an at-risk community. In communities where modeled evacuation times exceed the event (for example, tsunami wave) arrival time, researchers can use the software with emergency managers to assess the area and population served by potential

vertical-evacuation options. By automating and managing the modeling process, the software allows researchers to concentrate efforts on providing crucial and timely information on community vulnerability to sudden-onset hazards.

Learn more at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/tm/11/c09/>, or go directly to the tool at <http://geography.wr.usgs.gov/science/vulnerability/tools.html>.

Graphs of evacuation times for Ocean Shores and Aberdeen were used to illustrate the tool's webpage!

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9. URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANTS AVAILABLE

The 2015 Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry grant application period is now open, and application forms are available on the [program website](#). Three grant programs are offered again this year: Community Forestry Assistance Grants, Inventory Grants and Tree City USA Tree Planting Grants.

Applications are due by 4:00pm, Friday, December 19, 2014. There are changes to all of the grant application processes this year, including a return to match requirements. Please review application packets thoroughly to ensure the eligibility of your completed application.

For more information, please contact Ben Thompson, Urban Forestry Specialist, at 360.902.1382 or Ben.Thompson@dnr.wa.gov.

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